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## ARNOLD'S INVASION OF VIRGINIA.

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WITH the establishment of Arnold at Portsmouth the campaign in Virginia may be properly said to have opened. Whatever military objects may have been accomplished by the raid to Richmond, there had hitherto been no combatants. The small body of British marched as they would, through an unprepared and defenseless people. Resistance now began to take definite form. The struggle waxed in interest, gradually drawing in all the principal characters on both sides and culminating at Yorktown.

The Virginians essayed two objects: to confine and capture Arnold and to detain Cornwallis in the Carolinas, thus playing into the hands of the British strategists, whose sole aim in sending Arnold was to divert the force of Virginia from being directed upon Cornwallis. Without military equipment and dependent upon shifting militia, they failed in both. Later, when both sides had been largely reënforced, success came with naval superiority, as must always happen when Virginia is the battle ground.

However interesting to the local historian, it is unnecessary to describe in detail the movements about Portsmouth during the two months succeeding the occupation of that town. Muhlenberg, on the north, and Gregory, with the North Carolina militia on the south, constantly sought to limit the enemy to their works. Besides fortifying the post and foraging the surrounding country, Arnold kept ever in mind the main object of his expedition: to aid the operations of Cornwallis by engaging the resources of Virginia within her own borders.<sup>54</sup> In this he was so successful that not a single Continental or militiaman left the State until the end of February,<sup>55</sup> while the resources of the State, the temper

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<sup>54</sup> For effects of Arnold's raid see Germain to Clinton, March 7, 1781.

<sup>55</sup> Kapp's "Life of Steuben," p. 402.

of the inhabitants, and military stores of all kinds, destined for the main army, were consumed or wasted by changing bodies of militia. As Richard Henry Lee<sup>56</sup> wrote to Bland, "thus the enemy may destroy the concert by playing interludes." With a coolness due doubtless to acquaintance with the militia system, Arnold planned, with a detachment of five hundred men, to enter by Currituck Inlet and sweep the North Carolina Sounds from the Chowan to the Neuse, destroying the shipping and distracting the militia of that State, and, with the assistance of a frigate at Ocracoke Inlet, to cut off the thin stream of foreign supplies that still filtered into Virginia by way of the Blackwater and South Quay.<sup>57</sup> Later he actually detached five hundred men to pass up James River<sup>58</sup> and operate in favor of Cornwallis, erroneously supposed to have already crossed the Dan.

The American plans of offensive action ranged in importance from Mr. Jefferson's scheme of secret abduction to the elaborate combination of Gen. Washington, involving all the elements of the Yorktown strategy, but failing where the later plan succeeded—in the coöperation of the French fleet.

Early in January a certain Captain Joel, a seafaring man, disclosed to Mr. Jefferson the brilliant idea of destroying Arnold's fleet with a fire ship. After some debate his offer was accepted, his vessel was equipped and appropriately named "The Dragon." Fortunately for Mr. Jefferson's credit in naval warfare, as no diversion or assistance by land or sea seems to have been planned in aid of the "Dragon," this scheme was abandoned in February, "its purpose being supposed to be known by the enemy," as Mr. Jefferson says in one of his letters.<sup>59</sup>

To us who for four generations have intuitively understood Benedict Arnold and Judas Iscariot to be terms synonymous with unspeakable baseness, small change of focus is necessary

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<sup>56</sup> Bland Papers, II., 58.

<sup>57</sup> Arnold to Clinton, February 13, 1781.

<sup>58</sup> Arnold to Clinton, March 8, 1781.

<sup>59</sup> Jefferson to Nelson, January 16 and February 13, 1781.

to comprehend our forefathers' contempt for the historic character. Mr. Jefferson's well-known letter of January 31 to Gen. Muhlenberg,<sup>60</sup> outlining a plan and offering 5,000 guineas for his abduction, does, however, throw a curious light upon contemporary passion. That a philosophic statesman such as Jefferson should have taken such measures for the punishment of a crime elevates the criminal to almost Satanic proportions, while detracting from the dignity of the Magistracy and of Justice. The seizure of Arnold, whose obnoxious presence had stimulated patriotic endeavor, could have had no beneficial effect upon the military situation, but such means of forcing him to face outraged justice must in future generations have tempered with sympathy instinctive horror of his crime. More blighting than sentence of court-martial, more salutary than physical execution is the fatidic judgment that left Arnold unwhipped of human justice, but "pilloried in eternal shame." To the writer of romance we leave the details of the execution and failure of this plot, more suited to his domain than to military science or sound policy.

Turning from these abortive efforts, we find the campaign begins to assume the regularity of military superintendence. The entire forty-six hundred militia that Jefferson had ordered on January 2 were never under arms at the same time. Nevertheless the force under Muhlenberg and the detachment with Clarke prevented recruiting the Continental line in the greater portion of the State, as the new law for that purpose was suspended by the Governor in all of the counties that had militia in the field. Unable, therefore, to reënforce Greene and incompetent to attack Arnold, both Executive and citizens saw the resources of the State being consumed without advancing any object, while Cornwallis's approach forboded complete subjugation.

In this distressful situation the popular mind turned to Washington, to Congress, to our allies, to every quarter whence succor might be hoped for. The absence of active

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<sup>60</sup> Muhlenberg's "Muhlenberg."

operations at the North and the vigor of the British generals at the South caused discontented comparisons to be drawn. Men murmured that "half of the burthen of opposition" rested on Virginia and North Carolina.

On February 10 Jefferson wrote to Greene<sup>61</sup> that "we must be aided by your Northern brethren," and added, "I trust you concur with us in crying aloud to Congress on this head." On the 12th he hinted very strongly to the President of Congress and to Washington that, in his opinion, the main army could alone prevent the loss of State after State in the South.<sup>62</sup> Other influences were also at work, and unfortunately a plan of relief took shape without consultation with Washington.

It is probable that Richard Henry Lee first set on foot the measure which followed. The design has been attributed to Jefferson, but without authority from his extant letters. As Washington<sup>63</sup> afterwards pointed out, the expedition never had but one possibility of success. Its inception was peculiarly unfortunate, in wasted effort, in disappointing hopes aroused in Virginia, and in fatally delaying the execution of a more comprehensive plan.

On January 26 Lee wrote to Bland in Congress urging him to strain every nerve for naval aid. He describes Arnold's force, and estimates that with the assistance of one ship of the line and two frigates, "the militia now in arms are strong enough to smother these invaders in a moment."<sup>64</sup>

Congress urged the project upon the French Minister, who laid it before Des Touches, then commanding the French fleet in Rhode Island. Des Touches, longing to break the monotony of his inaction, received the suggestion at a time when Arbuthnot's fleet had been shattered by a storm (January 22), and on February 9 detached M. Le Gardeur de Tilly with the force indicated in Lee's letter. Meantime Rochambeau reported to Washington the measures on foot

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<sup>61</sup> Jefferson to Greene, February 10, 1781. MS. Letter Book.

<sup>62</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, 1781.

<sup>63</sup> Sparks's Writings of Washington, VII., 411.

<sup>64</sup> Bland Papers, II., 58.

against Arnold and added: "Nous avons beau jeu sur lui dans ce moment ci."<sup>65</sup>

A favorable wind brought De Tilly to Lynhaven Bay<sup>66</sup> on the 13th. He arrived unannounced. No preparation had been made by friend or foe. Indeed, Arnold had detached Simcoe with four hundred men as far as Northwest Landing, and Jefferson did not hear of his arrival until two days afterwards.<sup>67</sup> Col. Dabney, commanding the lower posts, erroneously reported the arrival of the whole French fleet to Nelson, who, under this impression, so late as the 16th, wrote to Steuben: "Now is our time; not a moment ought to be lost." As soon as the news was received Steuben sent an aid-de-camp to the French commander, and issued orders for active coöperation against Portsmouth.

On the 16th Jefferson wrote to Capt. Maxwell, of the navy, directing certain vessels to be prepared to coöperate with the French fleet, and on the same day, to Maj. Claiborne to impress boats for passing militia across James River, a need which Washington had foreseen early in November of the preceding year. On the next day one-fourth<sup>68</sup> of the militia of Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William, and Fauquier are ordered to Williamsburg to take the places of eight hundred riflemen who have been detached under Lawson to reënforce Gen. Greene.

Steuben ordered Gregory's North Carolina militia to hold themselves in readiness on the eastern side of the Dismal Swamp, and expresses were established to keep in touch with him. Nelson was ordered to prepare to cross the river, and Weedon, with eight hundred militia from about Fredericksburg, to occupy the posts so vacated. Steuben's biographer says that "eight eighteen pounders and two mortars were got in readiness," but, as Muhlenberg writes on the 24th that he has only two brass six pounders, and as only half so many

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<sup>65</sup> Rochambeau's MS. Letter Book, p. 221 (February 3, 1781), Library of Congress.

<sup>66</sup> Arnold to Clinton, February 25, 1781.

<sup>67</sup> Jefferson to Washington, February 17, 1781.

<sup>68</sup> Amounting to 1,090 men. Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, Feb. 22, 1781.

eighteen pounders were even hoped for a month later, so great forwardness in the ordnance department is impossible. On the 18th Muhlenberg<sup>69</sup> advanced within sight of the enemy's lines, cut off a small picket, and defied Arnold to leave his works. He could not storm the works with only three hundred bayonets among his two thousand militia, nor could he attack by regular approaches with two brass six pounders.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly he retired sixteen miles, and camped at Shoulder's Hill, and on the following day De Tilly sailed for Newport.

The folly of De Tilly's expedition was the natural fruit of a civilian's plan intrusted to the indiscriminating ardor of impatient naval Frenchmen. The French admiral was informed of the location of Arnold, and that, by the chart, the draft of his own ships would not permit of his approach within range of the British anchorage. Knowing that the British fleet would refit before a blockade could be successful, and with no plan prearranged with the land forces, it was useless to bring the sixty-four gun *L'Eveille* to Sewell's Point, or to ground the *Surveillante* farther up the Elizabeth river. It was natural that the Virginian Executive and general officers should have striven even against military probabilities to coöperate with their long-wished-for ally. But general and clamorous discontent was the inevitable result of fruitless expense to the State and inconvenience to the citizen-militia. It seems to be a fact, however, that upon news of its arrival Mr. Jefferson correctly estimated the value of the expedition.<sup>71</sup>

The capture of the *Romulus*, of forty-four guns, surprised in Hampton Roads, eight other small prizes, and some dispatches indicating the proposed permanence of the post at Portsmouth, were the only fruits of De Tilly's expedition. On the other hand, the British commander, informed of the movement on the 18th, and regarding the squadron only as an *avante garde*, prepared to reënforce Arnold with two

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<sup>69</sup> Muhlenburg to Steuben, February 19, 1781.

<sup>70</sup> Muhlenburg to Greene, February 24, 1781.

<sup>71</sup> Jefferson to Washington, February 17, 1781.

thousand troops as soon as the admiral should be able to locate the main fleet.<sup>72</sup>

Meantime, occupied with his own more immediate plans, and oppressed by the poverty of his resources, Washington's mind slowly but methodically grasped the situation in Virginia, and determined to take a hand there, the more willingly, as it is said, in the hope of capturing the traitor commanding in the Old Dominion.

On February 7, before receiving Rochambeau's letter of the 3d, he wrote to that general: "If M. Des Touches has acquired a superiority which puts him in a position to act, your excellency sees as I do that this (Arnold's) detachment is an object of attention."<sup>73</sup> On the 15th,<sup>74</sup> still unaware that De Tilly had set off half cocked, he discussed the plan submitted by Rochambeau, and pointed out that "unless the ships sent by M. Des Touches should happen upon Arnold whilst he was embarked and moving from one point to another, they would have little prospect of success." Believing that he might count upon the whole French fleet, he announced the detachment of one thousand two hundred light infantry to proceed by the Head of Elk to coöperate at Portsmouth.

When this letter was received it was too late to follow the advice given, though Des Touches,<sup>75</sup> somewhat vaguely, promised to hold the remainder of his fleet in readiness to protect the flying squadron. When De Tilly returned, on the 24th, the French commanders finally realized Washington's sense of the importance of the operation against Arnold, and immediately began preparations according to his original plan. Of land forces Rochambeau<sup>76</sup> provided one thousand two hundred and twenty men under Baron de Viomenil, with four twelve pounders, four four pounders, and four mortars. Though Des Touches was aware that the America, re-

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<sup>72</sup> Clinton to Arnold, February 18 and March 1, 1781.

<sup>73</sup> Rochambeau's MS. Letter Book, p. 225.

<sup>74</sup> Sparks's Writings of Washington, VII., 411.

<sup>75</sup> Sparks's Writings of Washington, VII., 424.

<sup>76</sup> Rochambeau's MS. Letter Book, February 25, 1781.



ported lost in the storm of January 22, had returned, that the Bedford had been remasted, and that haste was of the essence of the enterprise, two full weeks were consumed in preparations for sea, a commentary on French seamanship and on the protection Des Touches would have been able to afford his squadron three weeks earlier.<sup>77</sup> Even after the fleet was reported ready, with a wind "favorable to them and as adverse to the enemy as Heaven could furnish," a delay of twenty-four hours settled the fate of the coopération.

Meantime letters from Jefferson<sup>78</sup> and Greene<sup>79</sup> excited more and more keenly the interest of Washington. By letters of the 22d to Des Touches,<sup>80</sup> and of the 26th to Rochambeau,<sup>81</sup> he enforced the gravity of the southern situation, and on March 2, after receiving intelligence of Cornwallis's threatened passage of the Dan, he set out to Newport to emphasize in person the urgency of the affair.

On February 20 Lafayette received his instructions, and, at Peekskill, took command of the detachment destined for Virginia. He set out immediately by way of Pompton, Morristown, and Trenton, at which place he took water passage down the Delaware. At Morristown he was joined by the New Hampshire line, making his force one thousand two hundred men in all.<sup>82</sup> So energetic were his movements that on March 3 the detachment reached the head of Elk three days in advance of Washington's calculation.

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<sup>77</sup> If refitting the *Romulus* caused the delay, her capture may be added to the evil results of De Tilly's expedition.

<sup>78</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 12, 1781.

<sup>79</sup> Dated "On the Dan River;" Greene's *Greene*, III., 175.

<sup>80</sup> Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, VII., 424.

<sup>81</sup> Rochambeau's MS. Letter Book.

<sup>82</sup> The detachment was designated light infantry, and was divided into three regiments, as follows: First Regiment, Col. Vose, eight companies, Massachusetts line; Second Regiment, Lieut. Col. Gimat, two companies, Massachusetts line, five companies, Connecticut line, and one company, Rhode Island line; Third Regiment, Lieut. Col. Barber, five companies, New Jersey line, two companies, New Hampshire line, and one company of Gen. Hagen's Regiment. At Philadelphia a battery under Col. Ebenezer Stevens was added. *Journal of Lieut. Ebenezer Wild. Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, October and November, 1890.

Lafayette's instructions<sup>83</sup> show that Washington had already been informed of De Tilly's expedition, but trusted that his subsequent recommendations would be accepted, at least to the extent of full naval coöperation.

Nevertheless, after learning that Des Touches's departure was dependent upon, and to be arranged for after, De Tilly's return, he foresaw the probability of British anticipation in the Chesapeake, and on February 27 ordered Lafayette "on no account to leave the Elk river until it is ascertained beyond a doubt that our friends are below."<sup>84</sup> Impatient to be in at the death, and dreading lest his countrymen on board the fleet should reap all the glory at Portsmouth, Lafayette disregarded the letter of this injunction. On the 9th, having at length secured transportation, he ventured to set out for Annapolis escorted by several small armed vessels. Here he left the detachment, and, accompanied by the Count de Charlus, son of the Minister of Marine, he proceeded down the bay in a small boat to enforce his demand for a more secure escort, and to superintend the preparations about Portsmouth.

This was the next to the last act in the original plan of co-operation. Two days after his landing at Yorktown on the 14th, Arbuthnot overtook the French fleet off Cape Henlopen, and Des Touches returned to Newport after an engagement commonly referred to as a drawn battle, but which totally destroyed the hopes and plans of the allied commanders.

Mr. Jefferson received the first news that came to Virginia of the intended reënforcement from the North. Washington's letter of February 21<sup>85</sup> reached him seven days later, and forthwith new measures were set on foot for concerted action. In order to appreciate the embarrassments that followed it will be desirable to examine briefly the military resources and military organization of the State, and the demands that had previously been made upon both. Losses by

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<sup>83</sup> Dated Windsor, February 20, 1781.

<sup>84</sup> Sparks's Writings of Washington, VII., 440.

<sup>85</sup> Jefferson's Correspondence. Randolph, I., 212.

previous hostile incursions, and contributions of equipments to the Continental line will not be regarded, though Mr. Jefferson attributed his present distress largely to the latter. Writing to Gen. Gates, on February 17, 1781, he said: "I have been knocking at the door of Congress for aids of all kinds, but especially of arms, ever since the middle of summer. The Speaker, Harrison, is gone to be heard on that subject. Justice, indeed, requires that we should be aided powerfully. Yet if they would repay us the arms we have lent them, we should give the enemy trouble, though abandoned to ourselves."<sup>86</sup> It will be understood that Virginia had borne her proportion of the six years' warfare. Occasion for surprise will be found, not in the fact that her resources were low, but in that her government had not learned to use and husband them better. Unsatisfactory as was the process of recruiting the Continental line, even more difficult was the work of equipping and arming all classes of men for the field. Virginia was practically dependent upon the Northern States and foreign countries for all kinds of manufactured articles.<sup>87</sup> Lack of clothing unfitted the recruits for service almost as much as lack of arms. Cloth, shoes, hats, and cartouche boxes had to be wrung from the scanty resources of Congress until the arrival of the supply which Franklin received from France in March. Uniforms<sup>88</sup> were of course out of the question, and a regimental coat was so unknown in the upper counties that the appearance of a lieutenant and his detail, equipped with some martial pretensions, spread the news that the British were coming, and caused a temporary flight of the legislature from Staunton.<sup>89</sup> Though lead, saltpeter, and sulphur were abundantly found within the limits of Virginia, powder and ball were always

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<sup>86</sup> Jefferson's Correspondence. Randolph, I., 210.

<sup>87</sup> On February 21 Mr. Jefferson wrote to Col. Davies, in charge of the recruits at Chesterfield C. H., that he had on hand a large supply of deer skins, but nobody to dress them. These he was willing to supply if Davies had anybody who could make them into breeches.

<sup>88</sup> No uniform was prescribed for the Continental army until the General Orders of October 2, 1779.

<sup>89</sup> Narrative of My Life. Francis T. Brooke, Richmond, 1849.

wanting, and the workmen at the lead mines finally contrived to cut off the whole supply by losing the vein.<sup>90</sup> Immediately after the Richmond Convention of 1775, manufactories of powder, cannon, and small arms were put in operation at Westham.<sup>91</sup> Simcoe says the foundry was a very complete one, but its destruction, during his January raid, left Greene's army, as well as Virginia, dependent upon the gun factory<sup>92</sup> and the iron works of Mr. Hunter, both at Fredericksburg. Whatever may have been the capacity of these shops, it is safe to say that during this winter and spring the enemy captured in magazines many more muskets than their total output.<sup>93</sup> It is very possible to criticise the dispositions that led to these losses, and difficult to overestimate the task of replacing them. Even when arms could be purchased, transportation by water was barred by the British war ships and privateers, and overland, wagons were to be procured only by impressment.<sup>94</sup> As an instance of these difficulties and dangers the chief supply of arms (1,100 stand) received by Virginia during 1781 was sent out from Nantes the preceding year in the ship *Committee*. The vessel was captured by an English privateer, recaptured by an American privateer, brought into Providence, R. I., and one-half of the cargo of two thousand two hundred muskets adjudged to the captor. At least a year elapsed between the purchase and the receipt. Efforts were first made to forward them by land, then by the French naval expeditions of February and March. Finally they were forwarded overland, and as wagons were not to be hired they were impressed. The arms were not available until June, 1781.

Beside the ill-equipped regiments with Greene<sup>95</sup> she had

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<sup>90</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, 1781.

<sup>91</sup> *Richmond, the Capital of Virginia: Its History.* John P. Little, Richmond, 1851, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> The gun factory was conducted by Col. Dick. *Journal of the Council*, 1781, February 7.

<sup>93</sup> See losses at Richmond, Petersburg, Point of Fork, Charlottesville, etc.

<sup>94</sup> Luzerne to Des Touches, January 2, 1781, and Letter of Samuel Nightingale, dated Providence, December 6, 1780. *Bland Papers*, II., 30 and 39. Jefferson to Washington, May 28, 1781. *Correspondence*, I., 222.

<sup>95</sup> Under Col. Greene and Col. Hawes.

no Continentals in the field. A return of the so-called State Establishment, dated February 6, shows:<sup>96</sup>

First State Regiment, 192 noncommissioned officers and privates.

Second State Regiment, 30 noncommissioned officers and privates.

State Garrison Regiment, 176 noncommissioned officers and privates.

State Artillery Regiment, no more than will form one company (serving with Greene).

About two hundred of these had been ordered to join Clarke's expedition to the Northwest, on account of the refusal of the militia of Berkeley and Frederick to accompany that officer. The remainder formed a scarecrow battalion guarding the prisoners of war.

Though the act for recruiting this State's quota of troops to serve in the Continental army<sup>97</sup> had been repeatedly amended, and debated by the assembly for a full month, its provisions were so lacking in vigor and directness as practically to defeat its declared purpose. No draft could take place under sixty days, and in many cases at least ninety days must have expired before the eighteen months' recruit could reach the rendezvous. It was so vicious in its bounty system that a recruiting officer declared it would "produce two deserters for one soldier."<sup>98</sup> Though its theoretical basis was a complete return of the State militia, several weeks after its passage Mr. Jefferson, in a circular letter to the county lieutenants, observes that "notwithstanding the requisition I made you six months ago for a return of your militia, you have not been pleased to comply with it."<sup>99</sup> He constantly repeats this demand until the end of February, 1780.<sup>100</sup> The substitute system, and the criminal provisions of law that required the arrest, trial, conviction, and sentence of delinquent militiamen and others, to serve a term in the line, utterly destroyed its morale and brought the honorable calling of the soldier into disfavor. Great numbers of people

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<sup>96</sup> Journal of Council, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> 10 Hening, 326. Introduced by Mr. Starke, November 27, 1780. Passed December 28, 1780. Journal of the House of Delegates, 1780.

<sup>98</sup> Davies to Steuben, March 10. Steuben's MS. Papers, Vol. VI.

<sup>99</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, January 19, 1781.

<sup>100</sup> Jefferson to Steuben, January 19, 1781.

were tired of war, and their sentiments added to the inherent futility of the act. The back counties would have none of it, and "Augusta and Rockbridge have prevented it by force."<sup>101</sup> Children and dwarfs, according to Steuben, were forwarded to the rendezvous, and on March 5 the Governor laid before the General Assembly a letter from that general declining to receive certain recruits as totally unfit for service.<sup>102</sup> Finally, at the middle of May, only one hundred and fifty recruits were provided with arms,<sup>103</sup> and by the end of that month five hundred and fifty in all of the three thousand required by the Act had been collected.<sup>104</sup>

It is true that the execution of the Act for recruiting was suspended by the Executive in those counties whose militia had been called into service—a tenderness for the people that evinces the responsiveness of a democratic government rather than appreciation of the military crisis. Yet not more than one-twelfth of the militia were ever in the field, while little more than one-sixth of the Continental quota was being recruited. Mr. Jefferson correctly regarded this interruption of recruiting as among the worst consequences of Arnold's invasion, but the proportion above indicated between the militia in service and the deficiency in the quota tends to confirm the preceding reflections upon the system.

It must be borne in mind that none of the Virginia Continental line recruited during 1781 were ever available for service outside of the State until active operations in Virginia had ceased with the capitulation of Yorktown. The regiment of Col. Greene, dispatched in December, 1780, and a detachment of four hundred men under Lieut. Col. Campbell that left Chesterfield C. H. on February 25 following, both recruited during the preceding year, were the only reënforcements that Steuben found it possible to forward to the southern army, though the original object of his command in Vir-

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<sup>101</sup> Davies to Steuben, May 24. Steuben's MS. Papers, Vol. VIII.

<sup>102</sup> Jefferson to the Speaker of the House of Delegates. MS. Letter Book.

<sup>103</sup> Steuben to Greene, May 15. Greene MS. Papers.

<sup>104</sup> Steuben to Lafayette, May 20. Steuben's MS. Papers, Vol. VIII.

ginia had been the organization of her Continental quota in support of Gen. Greene.<sup>105</sup>

Returning now to the demands upon the Virginia militia, a brief summary of events will enable us to resume the continuous narrative of the campaign where it was interrupted on the first arrival of Lafayette in Virginia.

Forbearing further reference to the detachment under George Rogers Clarke (as only indirectly connected with the purpose of this paper), we left Gen. Muhlenberg and about three thousand seven hundred militia endeavoring to restrain Arnold at Portsmouth. There was also a small detachment serving with Gen. Greene, but their three months' term of enlistment expiring with the end of January, notwithstanding the critical situation of affairs in that quarter, they even refuse to escort the Cowpens prisoners to a place of safety, and force Gen. Stevens to march them homeward as rapidly as possible in order to save their arms from being dispersed.<sup>106</sup> Retiring with a mere handful of men, before Cornwallis's rapid advance, Greene crossed the Dan river on February 14. The news of his helpless situation was exaggerated by reports that Cornwallis had also crossed that river with five thousand men and was in march toward Petersburg.<sup>107</sup> Jefferson issues orders with promptness, and the militia respond with more alacrity than common. Upon the first news he proposes to send reënforcements of two thousand seven hundred and sixty-four men.<sup>108</sup> On the 15th Col. C. Lynch is requested to raise volunteers in Bedford.<sup>108</sup> On the same day circular letters to the county lieutenants of Washington, Montgomery, and Botetourt call for five hundred riflemen, and Pittsylvania and Henry are required to furnish four hundred and eighty militiamen—"the latter will want arms."<sup>108</sup> The four hundred regulars at Chesterfield

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<sup>105</sup> Kapps's *Steuben*, pp. 402, 403.

<sup>106</sup> Girardin, *History of Virginia* (Burk's, Vol. IV.), and Stevens's letters of January 24 and February 8, pp. 477-479. They were disbanded at Pittsylvania C. H.

<sup>107</sup> Arnold to Clinton, February 25, 1781. *Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy*.

<sup>108</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, 1781.

C. H. received definite orders to march, and eight hundred riflemen from Rockbridge, Augusta, Rockingham, and Shenandoah, already embodied under Muhlenberg, are designed to proceed under Lawson, "if they can be induced to go willingly."<sup>108</sup> On the 17th Jefferson sends Greene full powers to call militia into service, and advises the Charlotte militia, under Col. T. Read, to support that general. The very interesting situation at Portsmouth, and the detachment of the riflemen caused Steuben to recommend a further reinforcement to Muhlenburg, which, as has been already stated, was ordered from Loudon, Fairfax, Prince William, and Fauquier.<sup>109</sup> On the 18th Cornwallis is reported to have reached Boyd's Ferry, and Lunenburg, Amelia, Powhatan, Cumberland, and Brunswick are ordered to send to that point all the men they can arm, while Dinwiddie and Chesterfield are to embody and wait further orders at Watkins's mill.<sup>108</sup> On the same day the prisoner troops of convention<sup>110</sup> are ordered up the valley, "keeping below the Blue Ridge," and Maj. McGill directed to proceed to Greene's headquarters and by means of a line of expresses from thence to Richmond keep the Executive informed of the movements of both armies, and the calls to be made on Virginia.<sup>111</sup>

The first reports from the militia were very flattering. The spirit of opposition among the people, stimulated by the public prints,<sup>112</sup> was universal, and the number embodied was said to be limited only by the supply of arms.<sup>113</sup> The North Carolina militia were also rallying under Gens. Eaton and Butler. The retirement of Cornwallis to Hillsborough was generally regarded as due to a wholesome fear of their prowess. It is difficult to say precisely what was the total strength of

<sup>109</sup> Amounting to 1,090 men. Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 22, 1781, ante p. 189.

<sup>110</sup> Col. Wood, commanding the guard, is informed on the 21st: "The meeting of the Assembly on Thursday sennight is relied on to furnish us with money, of which we have not at present one shilling."

<sup>111</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, 1781.

<sup>112</sup> "If our countrymen turn out with spirit, the capture of Lord Cornwallis's army is inevitable as fate, and will close the scene of the southern war." *Virginia Gazette*, February 17, 1781.

<sup>113</sup> Jefferson to Washington, February 26. MS. Letter Book, 1781.



the Virginian militia under Stevens and Lawson at the battle of Guildford. Five days before the battle Greene had between eight and nine hundred, only thirty of whom were Carolinians, and he wrote to Jefferson that, though near five thousand have been in motion for the past few weeks, they came and went so irregularly that he could make no calculation on the strength of his army.<sup>114</sup> Of the two thousand seven hundred and fifty-three militia officially reported as present at Guilford (March 15), it is probable that considerably more than one-half were Virginians.<sup>115</sup> Their enthusiasm, however, was short-lived. On March 19 Jefferson wrote:<sup>116</sup> "I find that we have deceived ourselves not a little by counting on the whole numbers of militia which have been in motion as if they had all remained with Gen. Greene, when in fact they seem only to have visited and quitted him." Greene hastened to report the fact, and to represent the necessity of fresh support. The defection was doubly unfortunate, as every energy was being called into play to coöperate with the French and Lafayette about Portsmouth. Steuben advised the detachment of two thousand men from Muhlenberg's command, and ably defended his plan,<sup>117</sup> but upon the arrival of Phillips with a British reënforcement he was overruled by the Council.<sup>118</sup> Such a counter stroke was in accordance with the Napoleonic maxim and the practice of Robert Lee, and if conducted by an officer such as Stone-

<sup>114</sup> Greene to Jefferson, May 10. Greene MSS. quoted by Girardin, p. 482.

<sup>115</sup> Girardin (Burk, IV., 482) gives the following estimate of the Virginian militia at the battle of Guildford: From Muhlenberg's command (Lawson), 500; from Pittsylvania and Henry (Stevens), ?; from Montgomery and Botetourt (Preston), 300; from Washington County (Campbell), 60; from Bedford County (Lynch), 300. Total, 1,160 plus Stevens's Brigade. Jefferson (MS. Letter Book, 1781, March 8), from reports of McGill and others, gives the following estimate of the Virginian militia at the battle of Guildford: From Muhlenberg's command (Lawson), 1,000 (stated to be probably exaggerated); from Pittsylvania and Henry (Stevens), 700 (only 480 were called); from Montgomery and Botetourt (Preston), 400; from Washington County (Campbell), 600; from Bedford County (Lynch), 300. Total, 3,000.

<sup>116</sup> Jefferson to President of Congress and Gen. Washington, MS. Letter Book, 1781.

<sup>117</sup> Kapps's Steuben, p. 415.

<sup>118</sup> MS. Journal of the Council, 1781, p. 101.

wall Jackson would have infallibly drawn the British forces in Virginia to the Carolinas. On March 29 two thousand two hundred and fifty-three militia from practically the same counties as on the former call were ordered to the southward, but Mr. Jefferson writes to Greene that the new militia cannot reach him before the former retire.<sup>119</sup> Thus the resources of the State are dissipated, both Greene and Steuben are crippled, and several hundred more patriots retire upon the budding laurels of a two months' enlistment.

Meanwhile the rigors of a winter campaign, more trying to the undisciplined soldier<sup>120</sup> than the fury of a pitched battle, is telling upon the militia called out in January to oppose Arnold. Badly clothed, ill-fed, without tents, and with scantiest provision for the sick, desertion becomes rife, and the utmost exertions of government are required to keep a force in the field. From beyond the Dismal Swamp, about the middle of February, Mr. Loyall reported that four hundred militia of Princess Anne and Norfolk embodied at Northwest Bridge were so dispirited from lack of communication with the main army as to contemplate laying down their arms.<sup>121</sup> This temper is not confined to Princess Anne and Norfolk, whose situation, among many loyalists and peculiarly exposed to the activity of the partisan Simcoe, was more distressing than that of their compatriots. On February 24 Jefferson writes to Steuben that the nakedness of the militia at Williamsburg has almost produced a mutiny, and adds: "You will judge from the temper of these militia how little prospect there is of your availing yourself of their aid on the south side of the river, should you require it."<sup>122</sup> Inability to coerce, forces upon the executive the pernicious device of calling upon the neighboring militia for temporary service.

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<sup>119</sup> Jefferson to Greene, MS. Letter Book, March 29 and April 1, 1781.

<sup>120</sup> "In battle the ardor of youth often appears to shame the cool indifference of the old soldier; but when the strife is between the malice of fortune and fortitude, between human endurance and accumulating hardships, the veteran becomes truly formidable, when the young soldier resigns himself to despair." Napier's *Peninsular War*, Book I., pp. 89, 90.

<sup>121</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 17, 1781.

<sup>122</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 24, 1781.

Accordingly on the 24th the county lieutenants of James City, York, Warwick, Elizabeth City, and City of Williamsburg are directed to take the places of the recalcitrants until the arrival of the musters from the Potomac counties, called out the preceding week.<sup>123</sup> During all of the last week in February both Arnold and the Virginians continue to be uncertain as to what may be expected from the French squadron of De Tilly. On the 21st Jefferson, believing that the fleet is on a temporary cruise, directs Nelson to continue the preparations against Portsmouth,<sup>124</sup> and on the 26th reports to Washington that Muhlenberg has closed up around Portsmouth, because the French fleet has relieved him of the apprehension that Arnold's shipping might take him in the rear by way of the Nansemond river.<sup>125</sup> Mr. Jefferson received on February 28 the news of the detachment of Lafayette from the main army to Virginia. During the remainder of the campaign, though interrupted by the confirmation of Des Touches's failure, and diverted by the incursions of Phillips and Cornwallis, practically the whole strength of Virginia was devoted to coöperation in the general plan laid down by Washington in his instructions to Lafayette dated at New Windsor February 20. Though the accomplishment of this plan was delayed for six months, and the scene shifted from Portsmouth to Yorktown, the postponement of fruition led, through means originally un hoped for, and through the disappointment of other and equally cherished plans, to the result that the forces of Arnold, Phillips, Leslie, and Cornwallis were finally ensnared in the trap that had originally been laid for Arnold alone.<sup>126</sup> The arrival of the British reënforce-

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<sup>123</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 24, 1781.

<sup>124</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 21, 1781.

<sup>125</sup> Jefferson's MS. Letter Book, February 26, 1781.

<sup>126</sup> It is of course known that Arnold was superseded by the arrival of Maj. Gen. Phillips in the Chesapeake, March 26, 1781. By letter of March 24, Clinton had directed Phillips to send Arnold to New York, "if you should not have particular occasion for his services." This letter was received by Cornwallis May 20, after the death of Phillips, and on May 26 Cornwallis writes Clinton that he has "consented to the request of Brig. Gen. Arnold to go to New York."

ments under Phillips, the junction of the forces of that general with Cornwallis in the face of Lafayette at Petersburg, the successful marches and countermarches of that young officer toward and from the head waters of the James, the coöperative movements of the French land and naval forces, and the culmination of the campaign at Yorktown in the following October, furnish material for separate chapters in the history of a memorable year.

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